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Sustainable development: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The number of disasters and the scale of their impacts continue to grow, driven largely by the increasing vulnerability to natural hazards, but also by the effects of climate change, threatening the lives and livelihoods of ever more millions of people and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. There is growing urgency to increase efforts to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. The world is not on track to achieve the aim of a substantive reduction in disaster losses by 2015.

Decisive and systematic action is therefore needed. That means a high-level commitment to reduce risks, supported by sound policies, strong institutional capacities and adequate budgets, at both national and local government levels. One notable step in accelerating the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action was the convening of the first session of the multi-stakeholder Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction from 5 to 7 June 2007 as the main global forum to facilitate concerted efforts in disaster risk reduction at all levels.

The present report provides an overview of progress on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action at the national, regional and international levels, in response to General Assembly resolution 61/198. It also considers trends in disasters and disaster risks, and the development of coordination, guidance and resourcing through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system.

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I. Trends in disasters and disaster risks

1. The number of disasters and the scale of their impacts continue to grow, devastating vulnerable communities, threatening the lives and livelihoods of increasing millions of people and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and adding more urgency to efforts to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.[1]

2. During the period July 2006-June 2007, a total of 366 disasters affected nearly 200 million people, killed more than 18,200 and produced damage of more than $30 billion.[2] Events included earthquakes, floods, landslides, wildfires, droughts, windstorms, epidemics and extreme temperatures. Floods continue to cause the largest impact, affecting more than 134 million people worldwide and causing the largest death toll, of 6,729, and the greatest damage, of over $14 billion. In the past year, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions were a distant second and third, with nearly 390,000 and 364,000 people affected respectively. Windstorms resulted in 4,179 deaths and damage of almost $14 billion, while extreme temperatures took a toll of almost 4,000 deaths.

3. A review[3] presented at the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva from 5-7 June 2007, reported that changes in disaster risk are largely driven by the increasing vulnerability of nations and communities to natural hazards, arising from such underlying processes as rapid urbanization, unsafe land-use practices, environmental degradation, poverty and a lack of public awareness in regard to reducing disaster risks. Two broad risk scenarios are present: first, the risk of catastrophic disasters in areas of high risk, where people and economic activities are intensely concentrated in areas exposed to large-scale climatic and geological hazard events, such as earthquakes and tropical cyclones; and second, the risk of low-intensity asset loss and livelihood disruption over extensive areas, where people and economic activities are exposed to often localized hazard events, such as landslides, floods and droughts.

4. Urban settlements are a growing focus of disaster risk; many are located in seismic zones and are experiencing rapid urbanization, resulting in high concentrations of vulnerability. Currently over 1 billion people live in informal settlements, accounting for 30 to 70 per cent of the urban population of developing countries. With current urbanization trends, that number could reach 2 billion by 2030, with a significant proportion of cities located in low-lying coastal areas or areas prone to landslides, fires, earthquakes or other hazards. With high population density, lack of access to basic services and other aspects of social vulnerability, such settlements represent a source of high disaster risk. At the same time, cities are also engines of economic growth, decision-making, trade and commerce, which adds to the urgency of the efforts to address the growing challenges of disaster risks.

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[1] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

[2] See EM-DAT: the International Disaster Database (Brussels, Université Catholique de Louvain, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/Centre for Research and Epidemiology of Disaster, July 2007).

[3] "Disaster risk reduction: 2007 global review", consultation edition (ISDR/GP/2007/3). See http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform.

5. The fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,[4] released in 2007, concluded that long-term changes have already been observed in aspects of extreme weather, including droughts, heavy precipitation, heat waves and the intensity of tropical cyclones.[5] The report also indicated that the patterns of climate hazards are already changing as a result of climate change. Furthermore, it concluded that it is very likely that hot extremes, heat waves and heavy precipitation events will continue to occur more frequently.

6. The climatic changes now observed and those predicted are expected to add to the burden of disaster losses, not only by increasing the number of damaging extreme weather events but also by increasing the intrinsic vulnerability of many populations, for example through water shortages. The fourth assessment report[6] concludes that the regions likely to be hardest hit include the Arctic, sub-Saharan Africa, small island developing States and Asian mega-deltas. Moreover, it is likely that the poorest among those and other regions will suffer the most as they are already challenged by current risks and have the least means to adapt. In some cases, hazard impacts may occur in areas that have never experienced such hazards before. While the report considers extreme events and impacts of climate change, there is a need to elaborate further on the issue of disasters. The implications of the current trends and forward projections in terms of disaster occurrence and the use of the Hyogo Framework for Action as a means for adapting to climate change need to be more closely analysed and assessed through a special report, preferably under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Such a report should also provide guidance for Member States on practicable measures to reduce their climate-related disaster risks.

II. Progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action

7. Within countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations strengthened their capacities over the reporting period to coordinate and implement disaster reduction activities. Regionally and internationally, stakeholders improved their strategies and mechanisms for stimulating and coordinating disaster reduction measures and for providing support to actors at different levels. The secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction supported those efforts, including by means of the development of guidelines for implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and the facilitation of information exchange through the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, regional and national stakeholder meetings and sector platforms and networks.

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[4] Available from http://www.usgcrp.gov/usgcrp/links/ipcc.htm#4wg1.

[5] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis, Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, S. Solomon and others, editors (Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[6] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, M. L. Parry and others, editors (Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007).

8. The Hyogo Framework for Action calls on States, regional and international organizations and the Strategy system and its secretariat to undertake specific actions to ensure the implementation of its three strategic goals and five priority areas. Section II provides an overview of key achievements at the national, regional and international levels, in the five priority areas of the Hyogo Framework for Action,[7] and of progress made in developing coordination, guidance and investment through the Strategy system.

A. Progress at the national level

9. The Hyogo Framework for Action identifies national platforms for disaster risk reduction as an important multi-stakeholder means for coordinated action among sectors. At present, 38 States have established their national platforms. Burundi and Togo established platforms during the reporting period; the French, German and Swiss platforms launched a national platform network for Europe.

10. Furthermore, a number of Governments have devised instruments to guide policy and have enacted legislation for risk reduction, while others have integrated risk reduction into their national development plans. A total of 109 Governments have now designated official focal points for the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of progress of the Hyogo Framework for Action, with the following countries joining the list during the reporting period.

Region	*Member State*
Africa	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia
Latin America and the Caribbean	Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago
Asia and the Pacific	Armenia, Cyprus, India, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Tajikistan, Thailand, Viet Nam
Europe	Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, Spain

11. A large number of countries have actively implemented disaster risk reduction measures in one or several of the five priority areas of the Hyogo Framework for Action. There is increasing concern about the effects of climate change and its link to disasters, which rallies more actors at all levels to consider investments in risk reduction.

[7] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

12. However, in many cases activities have been limited and isolated. Often, support from higher government levels is still insufficient, often as a result of limited understanding of the subject, constant political changes, a lack of stable human resources and technical expertise and insufficient financial resources and know-how to integrate disaster risk reduction into development programmes. Those recurrent challenges to the effective implementation of disaster risk reduction still remain.

Priority 1
Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation

13. Countries in some regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean and parts of Asia and the Pacific, have been able to build on several decades of experience in addressing disaster risk, but in many other countries, particularly outside areas of high risk, the need to include disaster risk reduction on governmental development agendas is a new challenge.

14. A number of countries with meagre experience in disaster risk reduction have made progress in addressing disaster risk by developing institutions, legislative frameworks, policies and strategies. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a law on the protection and rescue of people and property in natural and other disasters is being developed, including a disaster risk reduction component. Honduras drafted a new law establishing a national system that harmonizes the subnational and national functions and designates specific responsibilities for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, early recovery and reconstruction to different entities at each level.

15. Many countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 or the Kashmir earthquake of 2005 are enhancing their legislative and institutional arrangements. Sri Lanka passed the new Disaster Management Act, No. 13 of 2005, and established the high-level National Council for Disaster Management. Similarly, following the 2005 earthquake, Pakistan established the National Disaster Management Commission and the National Disaster Management Authority, the latter of which acts as the implementing, coordinating and monitoring body for disaster risk reduction, response and recovery at the national, provincial and district levels. The National Disaster Management Framework was also launched and a national disaster management fund established. In April, the Parliament of Indonesia approved comprehensive disaster management legislation that encompasses disaster risk reduction and decentralized disaster management.

16. In Fiji, the national disaster risk management arrangements are the result of a review of the Fiji National Disaster Management Plan of 1995 and the Natural Disaster Management Act of 1998. The arrangements provide a mechanism for an all-hazards approach and reiterates the need for the incorporation of comprehensive hazard and risk management practices into development planning and budgeting processes, to ensure that disaster risk reduction initiatives are fully mainstreamed.

17. While an increasing number of countries are addressing disaster risk reduction, most are still largely focused on mortality risk, through improvements in disaster response, preparedness, early warning and public awareness. In the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, for example, disaster risk reduction is new, and

existing legislation is dominated by traditional civil protection structures focusing primarily on response and preparedness.

18. In Latin America, Argentina, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have developed their national platforms and expect to establish them by the end of 2007. El Salvador has adopted a new law for civil defence, prevention and disaster mitigation and has created a civil defence, prevention and disaster mitigation fund. In the Caribbean, the Cayman Islands are developing a strategic framework to guide risk reduction, based on the Hyogo Framework for Action, and launched a new specialized agency, Hazard Management Cayman Islands.

19. Community-based disaster management is increasingly being adopted in Asia, by non-governmental organizations and by public institutions alike. In Cambodia, a community-based disaster risk reduction strategy for flood and drought was launched to promote and implement community-based action for self-reliance.

Priority 2
Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

20. Risk identification provides key baseline information for the development of disaster risk reduction measures. Sri Lanka has completed the development of a national disaster database, providing a comprehensive picture of disaster occurrence and loss. Some Asian countries, such as India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives and Thailand are developing similar disaster risk databases. Some countries have developed maps and atlases of hazards, vulnerabilities and risks, to improve public awareness and to guide decision-making. For example, El Salvador has made progress in data compilation and analysis for the construction of a number of risk indexes using a methodology developed by the Inter-American Development Bank and has developed a new set of indicators for monitoring disaster risk.

21. In the Russian Federation, the federal programme is supporting scientific and applied research, upgrading earthquake monitoring and tsunami warning systems, and developing effective forecasting, early warning and communication systems for areas with high population density. Governments in Africa and Asia are cooperating to develop a tsunami warning system through the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System. Eleven Governments submitted official requests with detailed budget proposals in response to the offer by the Indian Ocean consortium[8] to provide technical assistance to develop plans for national tsunami early warning systems. Since then, donors have been briefed about the funding gaps, and a consultation meeting took place in April 2007 to discuss the implementation process.

22. Many gaps in observation and warning systems still remain. In Africa, in particular, the acquisition and maintenance of hazard monitoring and communication equipment remains a major barrier. In other countries, there is still a gap between the development of regional and national hazard warning capacities and their links to effective local capacities to receive and effectively use early warning.

[8] A partnership among the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Bank and the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

Priority 3
Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

23. Progress has been made in increasing public awareness, by including disaster risk reduction in school curricula and by producing and disseminating educational materials. Several countries in Asia are introducing disaster risk reduction into the school curriculum at different levels. In India, the national educational policy includes disaster management content, which has been translated into specific programmes in schools, supported nationally and by non-governmental organizations, to prepare teachers, students and communities to minimize the loss of lives and property in the event of earthquakes, fire or explosions. In Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have included disaster risk reduction into the elementary school curriculum as a pilot project. In the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies and the Elimination of the Consequences of Natural Disasters is distributing electronic textbooks and is training 9,000 teachers per year in civil defence and disaster response skills. In Africa, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Madagascar and Seychelles have made progress towards the integration of disaster risk reduction into school curricula.

24. Governments in high-risk countries throughout Latin America continue to advocate for the need to integrate disaster risk reduction into the school curricula; activities range from producing materials to political commitments from Ministries of Education, to successful communication and resource mobilization strategies.

Priority 4
Reduce the underlying risk factors

25. A small number of countries have reported progress in reducing the underlying risk factors. Some have implemented physical mitigation measures, by retrofitting existing buildings or by strengthening building codes. Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania have included disaster reduction concerns in national development and poverty reduction strategies. Only a few countries, such as the Maldives, report the application of strategic national planning efforts to reduce disaster risk.

26. An important step towards reducing the underlying risk factors is to mainstream risk assessments and hazard protection measures into development programmes. Uganda has mainstreamed disaster risk reduction in its poverty reduction strategy. Nigeria has not only mainstreamed the Hyogo Framework for Action into its National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy but has also started to integrate disaster risk reduction into its sectoral annual programmes and budgets.

27. In Viet Nam, the Viet Nam disaster mitigation partnership facilitated dialogue on critical issues in disaster reduction, deepening understanding of disasters in the broader development context and promoting knowledge-sharing and coherence in all disaster reduction efforts among donors, non-governmental organizations and the Government. The partnership promotes long-term disaster risk reduction and contributes significantly to poverty reduction and the sustainable management of natural resources, including the integrated management of river basins, wetlands and coastal systems.

28. Sri Lanka, supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has strengthened capacities for strategic environmental assessments through the establishment of an intersectoral task force that in 2006 gained parliamentary support for inclusion of the assessments as part of development planning processes.

29. Algeria has improved its building codes and planning laws to reduce future risk, and Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic are reviewing their arrangements to manage earthquake risk. To reduce flood risk, the Islamic Republic of Iran is retrofitting a large number of houses and strengthening key buildings and facilities subject to earthquake risk. Some countries have trained builders in the informal sector in safe building techniques. Such programmes have been developed in Pakistan during the reporting period, following the earthquake in 2005. However, enforcing building codes and regulations effectively remains a challenge.

30. In Europe the issue of adaptation to climate change is starting to influence the disaster risk reduction agenda. In France, Germany, Norway and Switzerland, national platforms for disaster reduction and Hyogo Framework for Action focal points are involved in the development of national strategies to adapt to effects of climate change.

Priority 5
Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

31. Effective early warning is a prerequisite for successful disaster preparedness, but it has to take root at the local level. Measures taken by Bangladesh, Cuba and Viet Nam have shown that local, comprehensive disaster preparedness, linked with national capacities to monitor and warn of impending hazard events, drastically reduce loss of life. A number of countries in all regions are now strengthening local capacities for disaster preparedness. In India, a network entitled the "Solution Exchange" will link practitioners who are concerned with a variety of disaster management and policy issues, techniques and tools.

B. Progress at the regional level

32. The Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction was launched in 2007 by the African Union with the objective of accelerating coordinated action among African Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities in implementing the African strategy for disaster reduction. Among the 24 African countries with national platforms, 7 have integrated disaster risk reduction into their poverty reduction strategy papers, namely Comoros, Ghana, Mali, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda. In West and Central Africa, where vulnerabilities are high and national legislation and institutions weak or non-existent, the Economic Community of the West African States Commission approved the subregional Policy and Mechanism for Disaster Risk Reduction in January 2007 at the summit of the Heads of State.

33. In Asia, legislative frameworks and institutional mechanisms are taking a stronger focus on reducing risks and linking disaster reduction to broader social, economic and environmental development. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, signed in Vientiane, provides mechanisms to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and assets of member countries. The agreement also

establishes an ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief Fund from voluntary contributions. The National Institute of Disaster Management of India, in collaboration with UNDP, organized a South Asia policy dialogue, and eight South Asian countries worked on a regional policy on disaster management and identified gaps in the existing infrastructure.

34. The Organization of American States has established the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation to support good governance-related activities in reducing disaster risks. The network supports collaboration among member States, multilateral and regional organizations in risk-reduction programmes, projects and strategies in the hemisphere, including the development of the regional platform to support implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

35. At the subregional level, three initiatives are of note. The Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America has relaunched the Regional Strategy for Disaster Reduction 2006-2015, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action, as a result of a wide participative consultation process. In addition, the project to support prevention and mitigation in the Andean community[9] has conducted a thorough compilation and review of policy instruments for disaster prevention and relief, aiming at harmonizing them within the context of the objectives of the Andean Strategy for Disaster Prevention and Response and the priorities set by the Hyogo Framework for Action. The project is also fostering the incorporation of disaster risk analysis into planning and public investment processes in the subregion. In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency is harmonizing the redrafting of the five-year Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Framework in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

36. In the Pacific, under the Regional Framework for Action, adopted in 2005, some Pacific island countries, such as Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu are in the process of developing and implementing national action plans and strategies in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action. The South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission is currently assisting 14 Pacific countries[10] in various priority areas of the Hyogo Framework, such as hazard assessments, early warning systems, information management, advocacy and public awareness. Development of a virtual centre for excellence for disaster risk management data, information and tools in the Pacific is under way in a partnership between UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission.

37. In preparation for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the secretariat of the Strategy supported regional risk updates and regional progress assessments, with the support of the World Bank and regional organizations. The reports are available on the Global Platform website as information documents (see http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform).

[9] Funded by the European Union.

[10] Funded by the European Union.

C. Progress at the international level

38. The World Bank, in collaboration with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, launched the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery in September 2006 as a major initiative to boost national, regional and global capacities to reduce disaster risk and respond effectively after disasters, particularly in low- and middle-income countries at high risk. It aims to facilitate a coordinated approach among donors to mainstream risk reduction in development processes in countries at risk and represents an important contribution to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Its three tracks support global and regional capacities, national risk reduction, and post-event recovery, respectively. Track I supports the Strategy's global and regional processes to enable leverage of country resources for ex ante investment in prevention, mitigation and preparedness activities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Track II provides technical assistance to low- and middle-income countries to mainstream disaster risk reduction in strategic planning. Track III serves as a standby recovery financing facility to support disaster-stricken countries' immediate recovery needs towards their medium- and long-term reconstruction development plans.

39. At the global level, track I resources have contributed to the establishment of a global information platform for disaster risk reduction, consisting of PreventionWeb (http://www.preventionweb.net), which serves as a virtual clearing house; to a global report on risk benchmarking and emerging risks (to be issued in 2009); and to a global report in 2007 on progress made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

40. Thematic partnerships to support the implementation of different subject areas of the Hyogo Framework for Action continued to develop during the reporting period. Thematic platforms now cover such areas as recovery processes, risk assessment, early warning, wildland fires, environment, climate change and education. Other emerging partnerships and networks include those for the media, non-governmental organizations, a gender group and a network of academic and research organizations. An initiative coordinated by the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction brought together private sector organizations, including the World Economic Forum, to explore the use of public-private partnerships to support disaster risk reduction.

41. The Fifteenth Congress of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) endorsed disaster risk reduction as its highest priority along with climate change adaptation. WMO adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action as the strategic foundation for its risk reduction programme, which is built upon strong cooperation and coordination with international and regional partners, involving capacity development projects in nearly 40 high-risk countries. WMO is also developing a strategy for linking the latest knowledge of climate change and extremes with climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies.

Priority 1
Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis

42. Several international Strategy partners have supported the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action at the national and local levels. For example,

track II of the above-mentioned Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery provides technical assistance to low- and middle-income countries to mainstream disaster risk reduction into their policies, planning and programming, particularly through poverty reduction strategies and various sectoral development policies. In 2007, implementation started in Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua and Viet Nam. Beginning in July 2008, track II will provide resources to 43 additional countries. In 2006, UNDP implemented disaster risk reduction and recovery programmes in over 40 high-risk countries to support institutional strengthening. To support those programmes, UNDP maintains a network of regional disaster reduction advisers and is currently in the process of placing 13 national disaster reduction advisers in countries assessed as exceptionally high risk. To promote good practice and the benefit from lessons learned from country level experience, UNDP launched a global review of its support to institutional and legislative systems for disaster risk management. The ProVention Consortium, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, produced and disseminated guidance notes for development organizations, entitled "Tools for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction".[11]

Priority 2
Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

43. The World Meteorological Organization has conducted an assessment of technical capacities for observing, monitoring, detecting and warning of weather-, climate- and water-related hazards at the national and regional levels. A total of 144 countries contributed to the national survey, which will be released during the fourth quarter of 2007. WMO has also initiated a number of national and regional demonstration projects, to strengthen operational early warning systems with a multi-hazard approach built on strong governance and organizational cooperation. Supported by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, WMO is strengthening the capacities of national meteorological and hydrological services in South-Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and West Africa, including facilitating their participation in national risk reduction coordination mechanisms.

44. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) oversees the coordination of the establishment of early warning systems for tsunamis and other ocean-related hazards in the Indian Ocean, North-Eastern Atlantic, Mediterranean and Caribbean regions. During the reporting period, regional and national networks on knowledge sharing and capacity-building for earthquakes and tsunami risk mitigation were strengthened and developed, notably in the Mediterranean and Asian regions. Major progress was made through the adoption of implementation plans for the Indian Ocean and the European systems. For the Indian Ocean, an initial tsunami early warning system has been in place since July 2006, while the initial European tsunami early warning system is planned to be operational by end of 2007. In the Caribbean, the tsunami early warning system will be closely linked with the infrastructure of the existing hurricane warning system. Other Strategy partners such as UNEP have supported efforts to strengthen Indian Ocean tsunami early warning systems by assisting in the development of national action plans and

[11] Charlotte Benson and John Twigg (Geneva, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and ProVention Consortium, 2007). Available from http://www.proventionconsortium.org.

by working with national authorities to design a project on the use of strategic environmental assessments and their application to risk reduction.

45. Several drought risk reduction initiatives have developed during the year. As a consequence of the Horn of Africa drought, UNESCO and the International Hydrological Programme agreed to facilitate the development of a regional integrated drought management centre in sub-Saharan Africa. China has launched an international drought prevention centre in partnership with the Strategy system. A guidance document was finalized with expert organizations, entitled "Drought risk reduction framework and practices: contributing to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action". Partnerships and coordination are being undertaken on the basis of existing mechanisms and networks, in order to foster actions to reduce drought impacts.

46. UNEP, UNDP and other partners initiated the Global Risk Identification Programme in 2006 to improve coordination among international initiatives and to share knowledge, information, expertise and resources. In September 2006, UNEP and UNDP hosted a round table on coastal erosion and disaster risk and vulnerability assessment in the Maldives, which led to the development of an assessment framework that accounts for the role of environmental change in risk and vulnerability.

Priority 3
Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

47. The theme of the international campaign for disaster risk reduction, 2007-2008, is "Disaster risk reduction begins at school". The campaign aims at promoting safer school buildings and incorporating disaster reduction knowledge into school curricula. As part of the campaign, the secretariat of the Strategy produced, in cooperation with a number of experts and organizations, an online educational game entitled "Stop disasters", targeted at children and youth in support of the disaster risk reduction learning process. The game was launched in March 2007, and will be available in all six official languages of the United Nations later in 2007. Nearly 60 countries[12] organized activities on the International Day for Disaster Reduction, including seminars, workshops, trainings, drawing contests, drills, drama and songs.

48. The platform on knowledge and education, led by UNESCO, aims at integrating a culture of risk reduction into educational programmes and at promoting safe educational facilities. Under the platform, an online library for education and disaster risk reduction is currently being developed. The initiative addresses the need expressed by Member States to have access to available educational materials on disaster risk reduction. The platform has engaged in the

[12] Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, China, Chile, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Niue, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

collection of relevant educational tools from Member States. More than 50 countries in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean have contributed so far. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has recently joined the interim organizing committee for the platform,[13] and has reiterated its strong commitment to education on disaster reduction during its recent consultation workshop on disaster risk reduction and education.[14]

49. The University for Peace, located in Costa Rica, has incorporated a course on disaster risk reduction into its Masters programme in environmental security and peace. The secretariat of the Strategy with financial support from the World Bank, will collaborate with the university by providing technical advice, human resources and other in-kind support for the design, development and evaluation of the course, which will benefit 25 regional and international students. A similar initiative is under way in Asia, led by the Middle East Technical University, in collaboration with the University of Madras and Kyoto University.

50. The Disaster Management Training Programme was transformed and reoriented into a Strategy-based platform called the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative. Launched in June 2007 by a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the secretariat of the Strategy, the initiative aims to provide an international platform to support training of organizations and practitioners. The secretariat also collaborates with the Delnet Programme of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization in Turin to develop local-level capacity development programmes, within the context of the International Recovery Platform. The first one-year course was targeted at the Spanish-speaking countries in the wider Caribbean and will be completed by the end of 2007.

Priority 4
Reduce the underlying risk factors

51. During the reporting period, UNEP led the working group on environment and disaster reduction and organized sessions, with the participation of environmental authorities, at the International Disaster Reduction Conference held in Davos, Switzerland from 27 August to 1 September 2006, and at the Global Platform session on the environment. UNEP produced a paper entitled "Environment and vulnerability: emerging perspectives". In addition, UNEP, in collaboration with the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment, supported training and a pilot project[15] to evaluate both the environmental and disaster risk implications of township plans. UNEP supported the establishment of a regional disaster management centre for Central Africa, in Brazzaville.

52. The protection of critical facilities and lifelines is an important area for which underlying risk factors should be reduced. The 2008-2009 international disaster reduction awareness campaign, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), will focus on safe hospitals. In addition, WHO works through an all-hazard

[13] Members of the organizing committee include UNESCO, ActionAid International, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, the Council of Europe, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ProVention Consortium, UNICEF, and the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

[14] Held in Geneva from 5 to 6 July 2007.

[15] In Panadura Township, Sri Lanka.

approach that also addresses biological, technological and societal hazards. A programme on safe hospitals is one of the pillars of its six-year global medium-term programme (2008-2013) on risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

53. The Asian Seismic Risk Reduction Centre was launched at the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to increase the capacity development options building on existing seismic risk reduction knowledge, as called for by the Hyogo Framework for Action.

54. In the area of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, Strategy partners and its secretariat have collaborated with the secretariat and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[16] on linkages between climate change adaptation and the Hyogo Framework for Action. Advocacy efforts with the media and coordinated activities by the Strategy-based Working Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction have contributed to an enhanced understanding of disaster risk reduction as an adaptation tool, including preparation of the guide, "On better terms: a glance at key climate change and disaster risk reduction concepts".

Priority 5
Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

55. Current efforts to strengthen response capacity at the global and national levels, including the introduction of the cluster approach, have increased disaster preparedness through a strengthened partnership system between United Nations and non-United Nations actors, including civil society and the private sector as well as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Federation has further developed the International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles Programme, which aims at supporting Governments in strengthening domestic regulatory frameworks for better disaster preparedness and response. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is conducting consultations to identify gaps and opportunities to mainstream disaster risk reduction into humanitarian action.

56. In 2006, the World Food Programme (WFP) initiated a process to strengthen its disaster risk reduction capacity. The aim was to create a policy guidance framework for disasters caused by natural hazards, with a special emphasis on emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation, and to develop a corporate strategy for compliance with the Hyogo Framework for Action. A number of case studies to assess the World Food Programme's disaster risk reduction capacity are being undertaken in Bangladesh, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique and Tajikistan. UNEP has also revised training kits to build community awareness of risks associated with industrial facilities and environmental emergencies, engaging in capacity development efforts with national and local authorities in Sri Lanka and Morocco. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reinforced its preparedness capacity through the creation of an emergency preparedness section.

57. UNEP is redesigning its commitment in the field of disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Among specific activities, UNEP will implement a project supported by the European Commission aiming at minimizing losses and environmental damage from natural and man-made disasters in selected tsunami-affected tourism destinations in India and Thailand.

[16] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

D. Coordination and guidance through the strategy system

58. Strategy stakeholders at all levels have a fundamental role in supporting the implementation of and follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action. The endeavour requires sustained high-level commitment, supported by sound policies, strong institutional capacities and adequate budgets, at both the national and local government levels, and concerted efforts to develop the information, tools, capacities and coordination mechanisms to support effective and scaled-up action at all levels. A strong foundation of scientific and technical knowledge is needed for risk reduction policymaking programmes. The Strategy provides the essential United Nations-based multi-stakeholder mechanism to support such informed and coordinated action.

59. A notable step is the establishment of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, as the successor mechanism to the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, to provide a regular global forum for advocacy, information-sharing, the coordination of action and the monitoring of progress, involving all the stakeholder groups responsible for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Global Platform met in Geneva, from 5 to 7 June 2007, with 1,150 participants representing different stakeholder groups identified by the Hyogo Framework for Action, including 124 Governments, 20 at ministerial level, alongside organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, and the scientific and academic communities. The wide and active participation reflects the increasing public interest and growing attention that Governments and other stakeholders are now giving to the subject.

60. The Global Platform proved to be a useful and unique forum for Member States and other stakeholders to enhance awareness of disaster risk reduction, share experiences and learn from good practices, as well as assess progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action, identify remaining gaps, and identify actions to accelerate national and local implementation.[17] In order to reiterate commitment and raise awareness, a high-level dialogue event examined the topical issues of urban risk, climate change adaptation, and political and economic challenges to the implementation of risk reduction. Inputs to the session included a global review of disaster risks and progress in risk reduction, and contributions from a number of regional meetings. The Global Platform outcomes are summarized in the "Chair's summary" (ISDR/GP/2007/6), which is available, together with other conference documents, from http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform. The next session of the Global Platform is scheduled to coincide with the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2009.

61. During the reporting period, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction reference group, comprised of 14 Strategy partner organizations, continued to provide to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator advice on the strengthening of the Strategy system and the development of a joint Strategy planning framework to provide coherent support for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action at all levels.

[17] "Disaster risk reduction: 2007 global review", consultation edition (ISDR/GP/2007/3). See http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform.

62. In order to complement the efforts of Member States and other stakeholders, the Secretary-General and his senior officials will undertake high-level advocacy and further strengthen the United Nations system capacity to support disaster risk reduction initiatives and to accelerate the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. That effort includes the articulation of synergies and linkages between the climate change and disaster risk reduction agendas and initiatives, as well as action by the United Nations Development Group on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development processes.

63. An informal Geneva-based Strategy support group, convened by Switzerland and open to all Member States, provided advice to the secretariat of the Strategy on matters concerning resource mobilization, the strengthening of the Strategy system and the organization of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Argentina took over as Chair in June 2007, succeeding Switzerland, which had undertaken that role for the previous three years.

64. As noted at the Global Platform meeting, progress has been made by many key stakeholders, including Governments, United Nations entities, and non-governmental organizations, in support of implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and of making disaster risk reduction a higher priority. This has resulted in an increased demand, as well as increased expectations, for the secretariat of the Strategy to service a variety of stakeholders, facilitating partnerships; monitoring the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action; acting as a catalyst and advocate for mobilizing commitment and resources for disaster risk reduction; and providing information and guidance, for example on sound practices, methodologies, capacity development, mainstreaming, development of indicators, reporting processes and resource tracking. The partnership with the World Bank through the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery has enabled the secretariat to strengthen its capacity to better service the system, in particular at the regional level, including through the development of tools and guidelines.

65. To better support regional efforts for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, the secretariat has strengthened its activities and staff resources at the regional level. A combination of United Nations Volunteers, national experts and international experts has been recruited to work with partners to enhance national and regional commitments and actions to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action, including through support to the African Union Commission and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. A new office was established in Cairo for West Asia and North Africa, hosted by the World Health Organization and the Egyptian Red Crescent and in close cooperation with United Nations system partners, the League of Arab States and the Economic Cooperation Organization. The office supports the development of regional and subregional strategies and generation of risk information, in partnership with the World Bank and regional organizations

66. The secretariat of the Strategy has developed specific guidelines and tools for lessons learned, including "Words into action: a guide for implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action", which provides step-by-step advice for government authorities and other organizations on key tasks for each priority area of the Hyogo Framework for Action. It can help States to assess where they stand in the implementation process and identify possible gaps and useful next steps to take with existing experience and arrangements. Other products include "Guidelines: national

platforms for disaster risk reduction" (UN/ISDR-03-2007-Geneva); "Building disaster resilient communities: good practices and lessons learned" (published by the Global Network of Non-Governmental Organizations for Disaster Risk Reduction) (UN/ISDR-06-2007-Geneva); "Gender perspective — working together for disaster risk reduction: good practices and lessons learned" (UN/ISDR-09-2007-Geneva); and "Lessons for a safer future: drawing on the experience of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster" (UN/ISDR-01-2007-Geneva). For more information on the work of the secretariat, see the information note, January 2006-June 2007, posted on the website (http://www.unisdr.org).

E. Investing in disaster risk reduction

67. Since the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005, commitment by Member States to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action has continued to grow steadily, as have efforts by a range of other partners, including the United Nations system, international financial institutions and civil society, to support nations and communities in reducing disaster risk. However, the progress made to date has fallen far short of aspirations. The main challenge over the next several bienniums will be to translate the increased knowledge and commitment into robust and sustained action at all levels through increased investment in disaster risk reduction.

68. Experts recognize that investment in risk reduction measures yields significant returns not only in saving lives but also in conserving livelihoods for families and in preserving the economic viability of communities. The projected increase in the volume of required resources will make it necessary to ensure that disaster-proof development aspects, based on sound natural hazard risk assessment, are integrated into sectoral investment plans and programmes in infrastructure, education, health, environment and social development, among others. At the same time, the commitment of fresh resources is urgently needed in certain areas, such as building and maintaining early warning systems for weather-related hazards and tsunamis.

69. One roadblock to increasing needed investment is the absence of a set of clear, unambiguous and accessible scientifically based studies on the economic and social costs and benefits of various risk reduction measures. Another is the absence of reliable data and information on current investments in disaster risk reduction. That type of information is critical to empowering and motivating policymakers and decision makers. As a follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, with support from the secretariat of the Strategy and drawing on the strengths of various partners, will provide leadership over the coming biennium for a critical assessment of the economic and social costs and benefits of different risk reduction measures.

70. At the international level, 2006 witnessed two noteworthy initiatives which could have a major positive impact on investment in disaster risk reduction worldwide. The first one is the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, which provides a major new instrument for assisting low- and middle-income countries at high risk to increase investment to reduce and manage their disaster risks. The second is the development of new donor policies to increase funding for disaster risk reduction. The United Kingdom, for example, commissioned studies on the need for the integration of disaster reduction into European Union development

policies. Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland are among the countries that are currently discussing how to integrate disaster reduction into their development and humanitarian funding programmes.

71. Support from donor Governments for the work of the Strategy secretariat also increased in response to resolution 61/198, in which the General Assembly encouraged the international community to provide adequate voluntary financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, in the effort to ensure the adequate support for the follow-up activities to the Hyogo Framework for Action. Currently, the secretariat is entirely funded through voluntary, extrabudgetary contributions, much of which are earmarked. Thus far in the biennium 2006-2007 a total of $30 million has been received or pledged from 17 Member States,[18] the European Commission, the World Bank and UNDP. That represents an increase of 10 per cent compared to the volume of funding during the biennium 2004-2005. However, the lack of multi-year funding poses challenges in planning Strategy activities. There is a need to secure a stable and predictable flow of resources to support the secretariat and joint activities by Strategy system partners. In this context, given the growing vulnerability to natural hazards, as well as increasing public interest in addressing that challenge, and the centrality of the work of the United Nations in reducing vulnerability to natural hazards, Member States may wish to decide whether the provisions of resolution 54/219 should be reviewed and whether other options, including funding from the assessed budget, should be considered.

72. The Hyogo Framework for Action states that Member States should "review the current usage and feasibility for the expansion of the Fund, inter alia, to assist disaster-prone developing countries to set up national strategies for disaster risk reduction",[19] and in its resolution 61/198 the Assembly reiterated that request. Pursuant to those requests, and taking into account the trend in contributions to the Trust Fund, the secretariat of the Strategy undertook a review supported by two independent studies, one on the complementarity of the Trust Fund with other financing mechanisms and programme management and governance arrangements and the other on financial management aspects. In its conclusions, the review indicated that the Trust Fund is an appropriate vehicle for expanded action to ensure a robust enabling environment at the global and regional levels for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, through the funding of the work of the secretariat and of a joint work programme of Strategy system partners.[20] The review also indicated that the basic managerial and financial control mechanisms were already in place for the Trust Fund to discharge that role, with the understanding that significant expansion in the volume of activities would be accompanied by a corresponding strengthening of existing managerial, programmatic and financial mechanisms.

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[18] Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom.

[19] See A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2, para. 34 (d).

[20] An initial joint work programme was presented at the Global Platform; see http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/first-session/docs/session_docs/ISDR_GP_2007_4.pdf

III. Conclusions and recommendations

73. A growing vulnerability to natural hazards is a stark reality faced by many countries and communities. Large-scale loss of life, livelihoods and economic assets continues unabated in many regions. Rapid urban growth in highly seismic areas has led to increased vulnerabilities in urban settlements and the potential for large-scale catastrophes in the future. Climatic risks, such as drought, extreme rainfalls and tropical cyclones, are also increasing. In recent years, the economic costs of disasters have risen very rapidly, severely constraining the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

74. Many Member States report the active pursuit of policies to reduce disaster risks. Despite those efforts, the world is not on track to achieve the Hyogo Framework for Action's sought-after outcome of a substantial reduction in disaster losses by 2015, and clear and appropriate targets needs to be articulated at the global and national levels. While major strides have been made in increasing knowledge and commitment to reducing disaster risks, the implementation of concrete measures is still lagging behind. Therefore, more sustained and systematic investments in risk reduction by Member States and donors are required. Efforts are also needed to systematically track progress, using measurable indicators and identify remaining gaps.

75. International cooperation is crucial to addressing the challenge of reducing vulnerabilities at all levels. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system represents a key mechanism to strengthen partnerships and to more effectively advocate, spearhead and coordinate efforts to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. In particular, the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is a notable step towards improved coordination of action, in such areas as the sharing of knowledge and experience, advocacy, the monitoring of progress and the identification of gaps and challenges.

76. On the basis of the preceding observations, the following measures are proposed.

Accelerate the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action through Strategy system mechanisms

77. The Secretary-General encourages Member States to increase their commitment to the effective implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, making full use of the mechanisms of the Strategy system, such as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Secretary-General will report regularly on the progress made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Strengthen national and local capacities

78. Member States are encouraged to make disaster reduction a core element of their development policies, to develop national platforms and similar coordination mechanisms for disaster reduction, to establish targets, programmes and budgets for their disaster reduction efforts and to monitor their achievements and share reports on progress through the Strategy system. Member States are also encouraged to ensure coordination among all the authorities entrusted with reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change in order to benefit from the synergies available in the existing tools, practices and experiences in both groups of actors.

Invest in disaster risk reduction

79. The Secretary-General encourages Governments, donors and funding institutions to increase substantially their investment in disaster risk reduction, as an integral component of all programmes for humanitarian action, economic and social development, and environmental protection, and to improve the coordination and tracking of those investments. Governments should also consider setting targets for public spending on multi-year disaster risk reduction programmes at the national and local levels.

Funding arrangements for the Strategy

80. The Secretary-General, considering the substantially increased responsibilities of the secretariat of the Strategy and the need for commensurately predictable and stable financial resources, calls on Member States and Strategy stakeholders once again to augment their financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction to ensure adequate support for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. In taking steps towards a stable financial base for the Strategy and its activities, the General Assembly may also wish to review the current method of financing the Strategy secretariat and its activities, and consider alternative options, including through assessed contributions.